



MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

Los Angeles River Center & Gardens
570 West Avenue Twenty-six, Suite 100
Los Angeles, California 90065
Phone (323) 221-8900

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Governing Board

FROM:  Joseph T. Edmiston, FAICP, Executive Officer

DATE: June 23, 2003

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item XXIII: Consideration of resolution authorizing the expenditure of funds from the Santa Monica Mountains Open Space Preservation District No. 1 to acquire an approximately 23-acre portion of APN 4379-035-013 located adjacent to City of Los Angeles Department of Water and Power's Stone Canyon Reservoir property, Los Angeles.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Governing Board adopt the attached resolution authorizing the expenditure of funds from the Santa Monica Mountains Open Space Preservation District No. 1 to acquire an approximately 23-acre portion of APN 4379-035-013 located adjacent to City of Los Angeles Department of Water and Power's Stone Canyon Reservoir property.

Background: As shown on the attached figures, the subject property is located in the northeastern corner of the Stone Canyon watershed just southwest of the intersection of Mulholland and Nicada Drives. The property is located below the Stone Canyon Overlook on Mulholland Drive. The property's western boundary has over 2,000 feet of interface with City of Los Angeles Department of Water and Power's Stone Canyon Reservoir property. The gross acreage of APN 4379-035-013 is 26.21 acres. The moderately sloped property supports mixed examples of chaparral vegetation and a few elements of riparian vegetation within a USGS blueline drainage that bisects the northwestern property corner.

The northeast corner of the property abuts Nicada Drive, and the southeast corner abuts Bottlebrush Drive. The Nicada Drive access could provide a trailhead for a trail into Stone Canyon or a small loop trail that ties into the Stone Canyon Overlook. There is ample street parking on Nicada Drive and shade from Italian stone pines. Much of the property is located in the Inner Corridor of the Mulholland Scenic Parkway Specific Plan boundary.

The two other private properties located in the southwest corner of the intersection of Nicada and Mulholland Drives were appraised by the MRCA and approved by the District No. 1 Citizens Oversight Committee, however a deal could not be struck with

the owner of the parcels. The subject parcel was approved by the Citizens Oversight Committee at its last meeting held on April 14, 2004.

In summary, the property contains important habitat within the Stone Canyon core habitat area and provides high quality viewshed from Mulholland Drive. The property is located within Acquisition Area B of District No. 1. No acquisitions have been made to date within Area B.

The proposed action is to acquire an approximately 23-acre portion of the property. Two portions of the large lot would be carved off. One such portion is an existing tennis court. The other portion is an approximately 2.0-acre lot at the southern tip of the property. The tennis court would become the property of the adjoining homeowner and the seller would retain a minimum 2.0-acre lot for future development.

The whole of the property is subject to an easement granted to the City of Los Angeles in 1976. The easement gives the City "full and complete control, for the prevention of contamination and pollution of all municipal water systems storage reservoirs and facilities now or hereafter constructed maintained and operated within the watershed area of Stone Canyon... The development value of the property is limited. The seller has agreed to sell the described 23-acre portion of the property at a highly discounted rate. The proposed acquisition price is low enough despite the existing development restrictions and brush clearance requirements. The area requiring annual brushing is substantial. However, the clearance is up to date and just requires light annual work. The merits of the property and its low acquisition price warrant the brushing obligation.

There is significant value in the MRCA obtaining fee title to important Mulholland viewshed properties. A confidential acquisition summary will be distributed at the meeting.

As part of the transaction, the seller has requested the right to permanently place a small brass commemorative plaque on a single stone along the southern boundary of the Stone Canyon Overlook parking lot (outside of the agency fencing). The size and location of the stone and plaque would be approved by staff and would be of such small size not to warrant any review by the Mulholland Scenic Parkway Design Review Board.